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# Effect of Communication Apprehension on Job Satisfaction with Information and Organizational Commitment among Lodging Revenue Managers

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# Effect of Communication Apprehension on Job Satisfaction with Information and Organizational Commitment among Lodging Revenue Managers

**Abstract:** This study assessed the relationship between communication apprehension (CA) in various work situations a revenue manager would face and job satisfaction and organization commitment. The confirmatory factor analysis shows that the second-order four-factor of CA was found to fit the data best. The structural model was tested with 241 lodging revenue managers, using the structural equation modeling technique. The results indicate a negative relationship between CA and specific job satisfaction variables. Revenue managers with a high satisfaction of information also demonstrated greater organizational commitment.

**Keywords:** Lodging revenue managers; communication apprehension, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, knowledge workers)

Revenue management (RM) is widely recognized as a critical element of marketing and pricing strategy in the lodging industry. This increased use of revenue management has generated the need for trained, skilled individuals who can execute the revenue management system. Central to the development of such managers is their ability to communicate in various situations, particularly where pricing decisions must be made (Beck, Knutson, Cha and Kim; 2009).

The ability to articulate complex RM strategies or topics in a clear and concise manner in meetings and group discussions requires a level of confidence that helps to establish credibility with the hotel's leadership (Beck, et.al., 2009). Communication Apprehension (CA) is a fear that obstructs an individual's communication with others and affects his or her ability to acquire, succeed and be satisfied with the job (McCroskey, 2005). Recent revenue manager research indicates that influencing others to accept one's ideas is a training need area, which suggests a lack of confidence in the ability to persuade others by lodging revenue managers (Beck, et.al, 2009). This inability to influence others could have a negative impact on the revenue manager's level of job satisfaction.

A link between communication and job satisfaction has been widely confirmed (i.e.: Swan and Futrell, 1978, Pincus, 1986, Trombetta and Rogers, 1988). Job satisfaction is defined as "a pleasurable or positive emotive state, resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p.1300). The fact that a revenue manager's responsibilities include dealing with data and ideas such as strategy, forecast data, and trends may suggest a negative relationship with job satisfaction, due to the nature of the hospitality industry and its emphasis on people.

The expertise and specialized knowledge a revenue manager must possess is becoming increasingly important to the success of the lodging organization. Lodging companies are looking to revenue managers for efficient problem solving, sophisticated forecasting, and trend analysis. The expertise required for such a position implies that revenue managers are knowledge workers. Knowledge workers tend to have a knowledge base that is analytical and non-substitutable (Reed, 1996). Reed described knowledge workers as being entrepreneurial, implying a high degree of autonomy. Extant research of knowledge workers in organizations would suggest that revenue managers' primary interest is the marketability of their own skills and knowledge in the external market, rather than a commitment to the lodging organization to which they are employed (Tam, Korczynski, and Frenkel; 2002). Drucker (1999) suggests that in order for knowledge workers to be valuable, they must be recognized as an 'asset', and that they must want to work for the organization in preference to all other opportunities.

The unique nature of the lodging revenue manager profession, combined with its relative newness, indicates a need for in depth study into various facets of the job within the lodging organization. The recent revenue manager research that called for additional training in communication (Beck, et.al: 2009) set the direction for the present study. Scant research has been conducted into the communication apprehension (CA) of hospitality workers, not to mention lodging revenue managers. With the high degree of turnover in the hospitality industry job satisfaction and organizational commitment are popular research areas; however little research has been conducted with revenue managers. One of goals was to examine the factor structure of communication apprehension using the lodging revenue manager. A second goal was to investigate the relationship between communication apprehension and job satisfaction on the part of revenue managers in the lodging industry. Finally, this study sought to determine

whether there is a relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment of revenue managers, based on the premise that revenue managers are knowledge workers.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Cullen and Helsel define revenue management as the ‘...art and science of predicting real-time customer demand at the micro market level and optimizing the price and availability of products to match that demand’. (2006, p. 8). Upchurch, Ellis, and Seo (2004) discuss the process of yield management, identifying the basic elements comprising the yield management *process*, in the lodging industry. Their study surveyed general managers, front office managers, and reservation managers. Many lodging companies have added revenue analyst, revenue manager, and/or director of revenue management positions to their property organization charts.

While lodging revenue management has been studied extensively (Okumus, 2004 and others), most studies have generally focused on the [1] strategic implementation of revenue management [2] the processes followed by the revenue manager to complete his or her job, and /or [3] gaining a better understanding about the impact of RM on customer relationship management (CRM). Several researchers concluded that the customer will be the driving force in future RM efforts, whereas the search for technological solutions to improve RM techniques has driven past RM efforts (Mauri, 2007; Milla & Shoemaker, 2008). Beck et.al. (2009) focused on the activities and the time allocated to being a successful revenue manager in the lodging industry.

Communications skills are very important in the hospitality industry, whether interacting with an external customer, or as part of the internal relations with organizational colleagues. Communication Apprehension (CA) is a fear that obstructs an individual’s communication with

others and affects his or her ability to acquire, succeed and be satisfied with the job (McCroskey, 2005).

McCroskey, Richmond, and Davis (1986) postulated that there are four types of CA: Traitlike CA, Context CA, Audience-based CA, and Situational CA. Traitlike characteristics are enduring over time, and highly resistant to change. Context CA, similar to Traitlike CA, is also a personality type orientation regarding communication but in a specific context. Audience-based CA derives from the idea that many people have apprehension communicating with a person (such as a superior – the Hotel General Manager) or group (the managing committee of a hotel). Finally, Situational CA is regarded as a short-lived feature of communication toward a certain person or group of people. According to McCroskey et.al (1986), the four types of CA fall on a continuum from most traitlike to least traitlike.

The classic definition of job satisfaction is “...a pleasurable or positive emotive state, resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Locke, 1976, p.1300). Although the effect of communication apprehension on job satisfaction has been studied in other disciplines and industries (Pitt, Berthon, & Robson, 2000; Gibbs, Rosenfeld, & Javidi, 1994; Harville, 1992), it has not been examined in the hospitality industry with respect to revenue managers.

Because of the nature of work in the hospitality industry, job satisfaction is an extensively studied phenomenon. Recent studies on job satisfaction in the lodging industry have addressed expatriate hotel managers, general managers, casino hotel managers and employees, and ‘hotel managers’. (Dewald & Self, 2008; Frye & Mount, 2007; Bai, Brewer, Sammons, & Swerdlow, 2006; Salazar, Pfaffenberg, & Salazar, 2006). No study has specifically addressed the job satisfaction of revenue managers.

Organizational commitment is described as the employees' willingness to contribute to the goals of the organization. While commitment is classified in three dimensions: affective, normative, and continuance, affective commitment is deemed to be the best measure of organizational commitment (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Commitment has received attention due to the impact it has on work attitudes such as job satisfaction, turnover intentions, and performance. Tam, Korczynski, and Frenkel (2002) asserted that knowledge workers demonstrated greater organizational commitment when involved in the sharing of knowledge to make decisions. Recent studies in the hospitality literature have addressed affective commitment, focusing on the intention to turnover (Buonocore, 2010; Aktas, Alan, & Ekin, 2009; Yang, 2008; Karatepe, Arasli, & Khan, 2007). Research into the organizational commitment of lodging revenue managers has not been investigated.

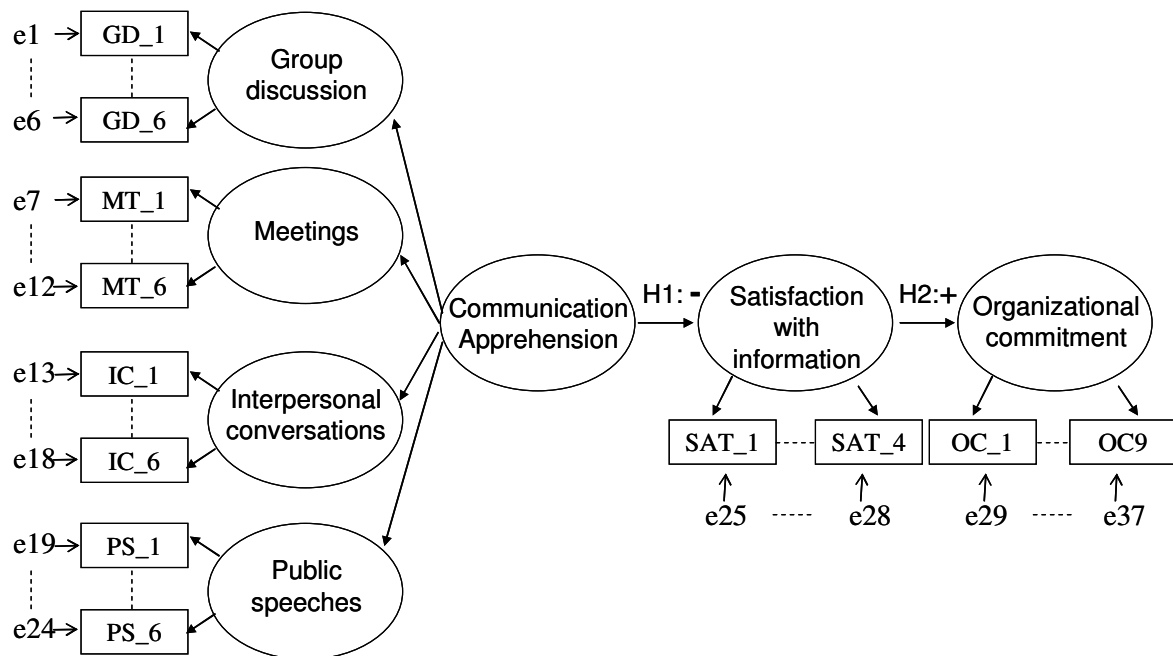
The above discussion leads to the following hypotheses for revenue managers:

H1: There will be a negative relationship between CA and Satisfaction with Information provided by a Superior

H2: There will be a positive relationship between Information provided by a Superior and Organizational Commitment.

The proposed path model, displayed in Figure 1, reflects the direct and indirect effect of higher-order or second-order factor structure of CA on job satisfaction with information and organizational commitment among revenue managers. The second-order factor structure of CA was proposed, since other researchers (e.g., Levine & McCroskey, 1990; McCroskey, 1984) found that the second-order factor model of CA best fits the data. The proposed model emphasizes that the revenue managers' CA on their organizational commitment is expected to be mediated by their satisfaction with information.

Figure 1 Proposed Model ( $N = 241$ )



## METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study was the lodging managers responsible for the revenue management function. A web-based survey, using SurveyMonkey.com was created to collect responses in a sufficient manner. Lodging executives from a variety of companies in the United States were contacted, and asked to disseminate the web link to the managers responsible for the revenue management function both at the corporate / regional level and at the property level. A pre-alert email was sent to potential respondents, advising them an online survey link would be arriving in their email boxes within a week. Respondents were given an incentive from the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) to complete the survey. A total of 289 respondents responded to the web-based survey during May 2008. After eliminating incomplete data, the final number of usable responses was 241.

The responding sample was relatively young and well educated. The average age of respondents was 37 years old. Nearly 75 percent of the respondents had either an associate,



undergraduate, or graduate degree. In fact, about nine percent of respondents had a graduate degree. Nearly 70% of the respondents reported salaries over \$60,000, with half of this group reporting an annual salary of at least \$80,000. The majority of respondents held the titles of Director of Revenue Management (42.4%) or Revenue Manager (39.6%). Respondents had working experience averaging 7.2 years in the hotel industry including 5.2 years' working experience in the revenue management profession.

In terms of the measurement scales, communication apprehension was assessed using McCroskey (1982)'s 24-item Personal Report of Communication Apprehension scale (known as PRCA-24). This scale measures a person's CA in four separate communication contexts: public, small group, meeting, and interpersonal (McCroskey et al., 1986). Satisfaction with information was measured using Wood, Chonko, and Hunt (1986)'s subscale of job satisfaction, consisting of 4 items. Organizational commitment was measured using Mowday, Steers, and Porter's (1979) 9-item scale. Responses to all items were assessed on seven-point scales ranging from "strongly disagree" (7) to "strongly agree" (1).

The structural equation modeling technique was employed to test the proposed model as well as the hypothesized relationships. Following Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step approach, a measurement model was estimated before the structural model using AMOS 17. The measurement model allowed assessment of convergent and discriminant validity of the construct measures. Based on the recommendations by Bollen (1989) and Hu and Bentler (1998), the overall fit of the measurement and structural models were examined using  $\chi^2/df$  ( $< 3$ ), nonnormed fit index (NFI  $> .9$ ), comparative fit index (CFI  $> .9$ ), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA  $< .08$ ).

## RESULTS

# The comparisons of overall fit indices for alternative measurement models of

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communication apprehension are presented in Table 1. The one-factor model and an initial first-order four-factor model of the CA did not produce a good fit with the data. Based on the standardized residual matrix and modification index, five items were dropped to improve the model fit of the first-order four-factor model of the CA. The revised first-order four-factor model of CA was a significantly better fit than the initial first-order model,  $\Delta\chi^2(100) = 451.6, p < .05$  ( $\chi^2/df = 3.09$ , CFI = .91, NNFI = .90, RMSEA = .09). Next, the second-order four-factor model was tested, with the remaining 19 items. The revised second-order four-factor model showed further significant improvement in fit,  $\Delta\chi^2(1) = 76.9, p < .05$  ( $\chi^2/df = 2.58$ , CFI = .94, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = .05), compared to the revised first-order four-factor of the CA.

Table 2 Comparison of overall fit indices for competing models: communication apprehension ( $N = 241$ )

Model	$\chi^2$	$df$	$\chi^2/df$	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta\chi^2$
One-factor model	1622.7	252	6.44	0.69	0.71	0.15	-
Four-factor model	953.9	246	3.88	0.83	0.85	0.11	668.8*
Revised four factor model	451.6	146	3.09	0.90	0.91	0.09	502.3*
Revised Second order-four factor model	374.7	145	2.58	0.93	0.94	0.05	76.9*

\* significant at  $p < .05$

The full measurement model consists of higher-order communication apprehension (indicated by group discussion, meetings, interpersonal conversation, and public speaking), satisfaction with information, and organizational commitment. The full measurement model fit was satisfactory,  $\chi^2 = 892.52$  ( $df = 457$ );  $\chi^2/df = 1.95$ . Other goodness-of-fit indices (GFI = .92; AGFI = .91; NNFI = .93; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .06) also revealed that the measurement model fit the data well. As shown in Table 2, Cronbach's alpha values were excellent for all constructs ( $\alpha$

= .84 to .96), indicating excellent internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Convergent validity evaluated the degree to which a measure correlates highly with other measures designed to assess the same construct according to Anderson and Gerbing (1988). All standardized factor loadings ranged from .72 to .98, which are statistically at  $p < .01$ . Furthermore, all average variance extracted (AVE) estimates in each construct exceeded .5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Both evidences support adequate convergent validity of the scale (Hair et al., 1998).

Table 2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results : Full Measurement Model ( $N = 241$ )

Constructs and Items	Standardized loading <sup>a</sup>	AVE	CCR	Item-to-total correlation	$\alpha$
Communication apprehension		.87	.88		.89
Group discussion	.95 (fixed)			.77	
Meetings	.97(13.07)			.75	
Interpersonal conversation	.88 (11.17)			.63	
Public speaking	.72 (10.66)			.52	
Group discussion		.75	.82		.84
GD1	.86(fixed)			.73	
GD2	.85 (16.59)			.76	
GD3	.76 (13.92)			.55	
GD4	.54(8.80)			.73	
Meetings		.82	.90		.91
MT1	.78 (fixed)			.74	
MT2	.76 (12.83)			.72	
MT3	.86 (15.09)			.80	
MT4	.87 (15.00)			.82	
MT5	.82 (13.82)			.77	
Interpersonal conversation		.79	.88		.89
IC1	.73 (fixed)			.70	
IC2	.85 (12.79)			.76	
IC3	.87 (13.24)			.78	
IC4	.78 (12.00)			.74	
IC5	.76 (11.60)			.73	
Public speeches		.83	.90		.92
PS1	.86 (fixed)			.81	
PS2	.82 (15.85)			.78	
PS3	.91 (19.43)			.86	
PS4	.88 (18.62)			.84	
PS5	.67 (11.90)			.64	
Satisfaction with information		.91	.95		.96
SWI1	0.82 (fixed)			.80	

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SWI2	Beck et al.: Effect of Communication Apprehension and Lodging Revenue Managers	0.95 (19.42)			.92
SWI3		0.98 (20.63)			.95
SWI4		0.95 (19.48)			.93
Organizational commitment			.76	.88	.91
OC1		.85 (fixed)			.82
OC2		.71 (12.70)			.69
OC3		.81 (15.76)			.77
OC4		.86 (17.18)			.82
OC5		.84 (16.61)			.78
OC6		.56 (9.21)			.45
OC7		.83 (16.01)			.79
OC8		.53 (8.67)			.51
OC9		.89 (18.16)			.83

\* Statistically significant at  $p < .001$

In evaluating the discriminant validity, Kline (1998) recommended that each pairwise correlation between latent variables should not exceed .95. As presented in Table 3, estimated correlations between factors were not excessively high, ranging from -.12 to .38 providing support for discriminant validity.

Table 3. Correlations Estimates, Means, and Standard Deviations

	1	2	3	M	SD
1. CA	1			5.23	0.46
2. SWI	-.21	1		2.34	0.12
3. OC	-.12	.38	1	2.11	0.65

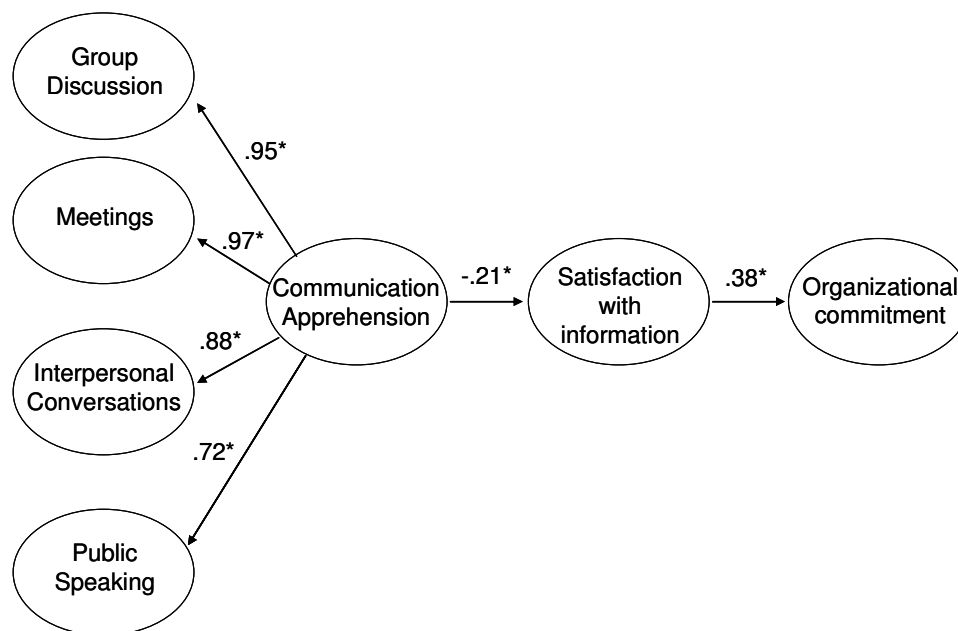
Note: \*  $p < .05$

Structural equation modeling was used to assess the proposed conceptual model, following the maximum likelihood estimation method. The results of the structural equation modeling are presented in Figure 2. The proposed structural model adequately fits the data,  $\chi^2(458) = 893.1$ ,  $p < .05$  ( $\chi^2/df = 1.95$ , CFI = .93, NNFI = .93, RMSEA = .06). Hypothesis 1 predicted that the negative relationship between communication apprehension and job satisfaction with information among revenue managers. Testing of H1 showed that as hypothesized, the relationship between communication apprehension and job satisfaction with information was statistically significant at  $p < .05$ , supporting negative effect of communication

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apprehension on job satisfaction with information. Hypothesis 2 predicted that revenue managers' job satisfaction with information positively influences on their organizational commitment. The standardized path was also statistically significant, supporting H2. The proposed structural model indicates that the effect of communication apprehension on organizational commitment was indirect, which was mediated by job satisfaction with information. The size of indirect effect of communication apprehension on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.08$ ), when calculated, was relatively smaller than the size of the direct effect of job satisfaction on organizational commitment ( $\beta = 0.38$ ). This pattern of result demonstrated that the job satisfaction with information played a mediating role as well as influencing organizational commitment directly (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Figure 2. Structural Model Analyses (N = 241)



$\chi^2 = 893.1$ ,  $df = 458$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 1.95$ , NNFI=.927, CFI=.933. RMSEA = .063. \*  $p < .05$

## DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of this study suggest that situational communication apprehension plays a role in job satisfaction with information for revenue managers. That is, revenue managers who are

anxious about speaking in various work situations, do not receive the information from their supervisors about their performance for the purpose of development, thus negatively impacting their job satisfaction. The finding from this study that job satisfaction is a mediator between communication constructs and organizational commitment is consistent with earlier findings (Yousef, 2002).

This study asserts that the revenue manager is a knowledge worker, one that brings benefit to an organization by identifying trends in the market place, analyzing data to establish relationships, using divergent thinking, and creating new strategy. These benefits require the ability to communicate in a variety of situations without apprehension. This portends a large issue in recruitment and retention: revenue managers that have the skills to confidently communicate, and create synergies among various teams in strategic group discussions and meetings must be given feedback to develop, which increase the likelihood they will be committed to the organization for which they work.

Revenue managers must overcome the resistance from those supervisors that feel that the revenue management process is solely to provide a recommendation versus the reality of the amount of information that they have at hand which drive their strategic recommendations. The less resistance, the greater the job satisfaction, which in turn increases the affective commitment the revenue manager holds for the organization. Failure on the part of management to view the revenue manager as an asset (as Drucker put it) with great information resources will increase the likelihood toward turnover (Buonocore, 2010).

While this study takes an initial step towards better understanding the job satisfaction and commitment of professionals in the revenue management field, there are other areas that were not addressed in this project, but will need to be taken up in future studies. What is not known is

whether and how organizational communication climate plays a role in job satisfaction and organizational commitment of revenue managers. Furthermore, there has been little research in hospitality investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and job performance. Because of the need to influence others, especially superiors, a direction for future research could involve Leader – Member Exchange (LMX).

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